

**Rebecca V. Like**  
Prosecuting Attorney



**Keola Siu**  
First Deputy  
Prosecuting Attorney

## OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

### County of Kaua`i, State of Hawai`i

3990 Ka`ana Street, Suite 210, Līhu`e, Hawai`i 96766

808-241-1888 ~ FAX 808-241-1758

Victim/Witness Program 808-241-1898 or 800-668-5734

---

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 19, 2023

## More Than 65 Elected Prosecutors Pledge to Visit Their Local Correctional Facilities

### *DAs to Implement Officewide Requirements Promoting Greater Understanding of Conditions and Implications of Incarceration*

Yesterday, County of Kaua`i Prosecuting Attorney Rebecca Like, along with 65 elected prosecutors nationwide [pledged](#) to personally visit the correctional facilities in which individuals prosecuted by their offices are placed and to require all prosecutors in their offices to do the same. The signatories – who represent nearly 51 million people across 28 states and the District of Columbia – emphasize that “it is vital for prosecutors to understand the true impact of their decisions and to see *firsthand* the jails, prisons, and juvenile facilities in their jurisdiction” The pledge is part of Fair and Just Prosecution’s ongoing efforts to advance FAMM’s [#VisitAPrison challenge](#), which encourages all state and federal policymakers to visit a prison or jail.

Prosecutor Like stated, “During the pandemic-related lockdowns, it became impossible to ignore the isolation and neglect of incarcerated individuals. As law enforcement officers, it is critical that our deputy prosecutors witness the consequences of incarceration firsthand.

Jails on the continent, as well as here on Kaua`i, continue to be plagued with overcrowding and a lack of continuity of medical care and mental health treatment. Humane treatment and access to services for incarcerated individuals translates to increased public safety. Having our staff know the implications of a jail sentence clarifies why individuals reoffend and facilitates tailoring probation, supervision and treatment to set individuals up for success.”

Each year, there are over [10 million jail admissions](#) and [around 600,000 people](#) are sent to prison. Prosecutors have immense influence over whether someone becomes incarcerated and for how long, but far too many only have an abstract idea of what these facilities are really like. As more prosecutors implement reforms to help reduce our jail and prison populations, it is critical that they and their staff develop a deep understanding of correctional facilities – including how

isolating, dehumanizing and unsafe conditions can impact an individual's rehabilitation efforts and in turn, the safety of the communities to which they return.

“It's hard to grasp how incarceration can cause irreparable harm to people if you haven't seen the inside of an American prison or jail. Yet, every day across the country, prosecutors who've never stepped foot in these facilities are making decisions that significantly impact whether someone will be removed from their community and sent to spend time behind bars,” said **Miriam Krinsky, Executive Director of [Fair and Just Prosecution](#)**. “We're proud to stand with the elected prosecutors who have made it a priority for their staff to see the conditions of confinement in their local correctional facilities. We hope these experiences will build empathy, heighten awareness of the need for alternatives to incarceration, and inspire other elected leaders to join the pledge.”

The pledge was last issued in July 2022 and now includes many of the inspiring reform-minded prosecutors who have recently assumed office. Participating offices will carry out their commitment over the coming year and beyond, as the elected leaders, as well as all prosecutors in their offices, complete visits to their local prison, jail and juvenile facilities. Requiring these visits is a crucial part of setting culture and expectations among those who make vitally important decisions in these offices every day.

Read the full pledge statement and see a list of participants [here](#), and read a [reflection](#) from Ramsey County, Minn. Attorney John Choi recounting the impact visiting local correctional facilities has had on his office.

###